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School Committee Minutes 04/14/2009

Approved by School Committee May 26, 2009

**THE ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, APRIL, 14 2009
7:30 P.M.**

Present: Joe Curran, Chair, Denise Burns, Vice Chair
Joe Curro, Secretary Leba Heigham
Cindy Starks Ronald Spangler
Jeff Thielman

Interim Superintendent: Kathleen Bodie
Chief Financial Officer: Sue Mazzarella
Special Education Director: Mark Ryder
Student Reps: Lauren Adleman, Brianna Dawes

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

SPECIAL EDUCATION REORGANIZATION UPDATE

Mr. Mark Ryder, Director of Special Education presented to the committee The Arlington Special Education Design for 2009 – 2010 school years. Mr. Ryder pointed out the out of district programs and the in-district programs and noted the tuition and transportation costs are significant and growing for the out-of-district students. Mr. Ryder would like to add to existing support and programs within Arlington Public Schools and respond to students and program needs. The special education department would like to meet the department goals and set up cluster schools to help manage district resources and centralize the testing centers for students.

Mr. Ryder acknowledged the letter he received from the DESE was made public and stressed that parents could contact him directly with any comments or concerns.

BUDGET DISCUSSION

Interim Superintendent Dr Kathleen Bodie spoke about receiving funds from the State Fiscal Stabilization fund and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) grant to support special education and early childhood education. The State Fiscal Stabilization money could change due to legislation. Dr. Bodie reiterated that the committee voted to set the budget with only using 414,028 from the \$914,028 State Fiscal Stabilization fund and the full amount of the IDEA funding of \$749,327 toward the FY 10 Budget.

Dr. Bodie presented fiscal year 2010 Budget Update for Arlington Public Schools; dated April 14, 2009 to the committee. The update included FY 10 Revenue Projection, Grant Revenue and Fee Projection, FY 10 State Fiscal Stabilization and FY 10 IDEA and Pre-K funding. The salary commitment and the expense commitment were also presented as it had been presented previously. Various tier recommendations on budget reductions were also discussed.

Mr. Spangler asked Dr. Bodie and Ms. Mazzarella to provide budget detail for the public to review and to have the documents posted to the website prior to the Public Hearing.

The committee members discussed the recommended budget reductions that had been presented and the Tier 1 and Tier 2 proposed reductions as well.

Dr. Bodie stressed that she is committed to working with the Arlington Youth Consultation Center (AYCC) and that she has met with Health and Human Services Director Christine Sharkey about this. Mr. Spangler requested a written plan on how Dr. Bodie will use AYCC next year, a plan needed by the organization as they craft their FY 10 Budget. Mr. Spangler would like this by a date certain, April 28, 2009.

Ms. Burns asked Mr. Skidmore if he could come back in two weeks on what the needs are for a 5 year plan for administration at the high school after learning that the additional .5 dean position was brought back into the budget. Mr. Skidmore would like to take this under consideration and would need additional time to prepare such a plan. Ms. Burns also questioned what the METCO reduction would be and Ms. Bodie noted that the actual reductions have not been determined.

Ms. Heigham was doubtful on attracting a qualified person to fill the half time Inclusion Facilitator position and asked Mr. Ryder if he had any thoughts about combining this position with another half time special education person. Mr. Ryder agreed that it would be difficult.

Mr. Curro requested details on proposed reductions in the athletic department. After Ms. Mazzarella met with the Athletic Director, the following cuts from the Athletic program were suggested: putting a freeze on purchasing new uniforms for next year; reviewing police details at evening games; reviewing the number of officials at certain games, which might need Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) consent; and possible transportation alternatives.

Ms. Mazzarella noted that some contracted services could be reduced by cutting down on testing the grounds on the fields and by better negotiations on various services to cut \$2,500 from the budget.

Mr. Curro suggested exploration of a differentiated fee structure for flavored milk. Mr. Curro noted that this would give parents better control over their children's choices, presenting his idea as a revenue enhancement consistent with school educational goals. Mr. Curro will not make a motion until some research is done but pointed out if each student in the town purchased only one flavored milk each week for \$1.00, we could enhance our revenue by \$66,000.

Ms. Starks would like to recommend the addition of soymilk and orange juice due to allergies.

APPROVAL OF 2009 - 2010 SCHOOL CALENDARS

Dr. Bodie presented the 2009 – 2010 School Calendars and noted that the professional development day for staff would be the Monday after Thanksgiving weekend.

Ms. Starks acknowledged she received one email and a few calls about Good Friday and questioned why the schools gave the day off for this religious holiday. Ms. Starks suggested renaming this day to Spring Weekend.

Dr. Bodie noted that other communities tried to keep school open on Good Friday but the number of people who observe Good Friday was substantial and not a very good educational day with so many absent. Good Friday will stay on the School Calendar. Ms. Heigham and student rep Lauren Adleman noted that due to the large demographics in Arlington who celebrate Good Friday - Good Friday should remain on the School Calendar.

Mr. Curro moved to approve the 2009-2010 School Calendar, seconded by Mr. Spangler. Ms. Burns would like the document to include the final product.

Point of order by Mr. Spangler, he asked if we could wait until the next meeting to vote on the calendar.

Mr. Curro withdrew the motion.

The committee voiced no objection to the early release days and the professional development day that Dr. Bodie presented; the interim superintendent stated her intention to submit the full calendar at the next meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Interim Superintendent Dr. Bodie had Sue Mazzarella, CFO report out on the MUNIS: FY 09 Expenses & Salaries and Operating Budget Appropriation report to the committee members.

The committee appreciated the Munis report but preferred to see the budget allocations broken down into the nine line items. The committee would like to enforce policy BI, which states the committee should receive Financial Reports monthly and suggested we receive the report the first School Committee meeting of each month.

Dr. Bodie reviewed the FY 2009 Budget Reductions - 9C cuts, the NESDEC Enrollment Projections dated April 6, 2009 and the letter from MSBA dated April 2, 2009 on the outline of Thompson Elementary School. Dr. Bodie reported on the team from Arlington High School who competed in the Team America Rocketry Challenge outside of Washington, DC.

ROUNDTABLE

School Committee members reported subcommittee and assignment meetings past and present: Redevelopment Board meeting on the approval of new CVS building; Crosby and Parmenter school usage; the Budget Task Force meeting to be held April 29, 2009; and negotiations with the Arlington Education Association. The School Facility Working Group is scheduled to meet May 7, 2009 at 7:30 to discuss Thompson School and review facility assessment needs.

**Mr. Thielman moved to approve the Second Reading of amended policy JCA: Open Enrollment, seconded by Mr. Spangler.
Vote 7:0**

**Mr. Thielman moved to refer policy JF: School Admissions, JF-E-1 and policy JEB Entrance Age back to Policy and Procedures to reconsider policies for review, seconded by Ms. Heigham.
Vote 7:0**

SECRETARY REPORT

Mr. Curro reported on all correspondence received: 2009 Patriots Day Parade notice; DESE on latest ARRA Guidance letter dated April 2, 2009; letter to Dr. Bodie from Board of Youth Services dated April 6, 2009; Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday Observance Committee letter dated April 6 to CFO announcing funding of \$2,540 to the Social Studies Department; school newsletters; Arlington Children's Mental Health Forum notice; and Arlington Public Schools April 1, 2009 enrollment projections.

CONSENT AGENDA all items listed with an asterisk (*) are considered to be routine and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a member of the committee so request, in which event the item will be considered in its normal sequence.

- * Approval of Warrant # 09139 in the amount of \$ 302,319.64 dated March 31, 2009
- * Approval of School Committee Meeting Minutes from March 24, 2009

**Mr. Spangler moved to approve the CONSENT AGENDA as presented, seconded by Ms. Burns.
Vote 6-0-1, Ms. Starks Abstained**

ADJOURNMENT

**On a motion by Ms. Burns it was moved to adjourn at 10:10 pm, seconded by Mr. Spangler.
Vote 7:0**

*Respectfully submitted by
Karen Fitzgerald
Administrative Assistant
Arlington School Committee/jc*